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ABSTRACT

Although the minority content of textbooks has increased and improved over time, its purpose and application are seldom discussed. Various approaches that promote multicultural principles, such as films, intergroup contact, curriculum innovation, multi-ethnic readers, and literature packages, are outlined in this review of the effective application of multicultural textbooks in the classroom. The review of literature indicates that favorable information about minority groups has a positive modifying effect on racial attitudes. Preliminary findings of a study conducted by one of the authors indicate that students became more knowledgeable about Afro-Americans and changed their attitudes as a result of the teachers' use of multicultural materials. The results suggest that the problem may not be the textbooks, but the ways in which they are used in the instructional process. The teacher's role is crucial: books can be thought of as the tools, and teachers as the catalysts. The more effective teachers use a variety of materials, make effective use of curricula, are aware of textbook limitations, and recognize the importance of interaction between teachers, students, and resources. (45 references) (LMI)

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MULTICULTURAL TEXTBOOKS: HOW TO USE THEM MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THE CLASSROOM

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"MULTICULTURAL TEXTBOOKS: HOW TO USE THEM MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THE CLASSROOM"

INTRODUCTION

The textbook remains the major instructional tool in American public schools. Teachers may plan instruction using school, district, state, and professional curriculum guidelines but it is the textbook that appears to establish the scope and sequence of what students are expected to learn. According to Tyson and Woodward (1989) as much as 75% to 90% of what a teacher produces as a lesson plan emanates from the textbook; and, in some classrooms, as much as 90% of a student's classroom time involves interacting with texts (Young and Riegeluth, 1988). Since the text is the tool employed for classroom planning and teaching and student learning, it is worthwhile to explore in greater detail its development, its content, and use in the classroom.

The textbook has long been employed in the teaching and learning process, so long that it is rarely viewed as a form of information technology. Yet from its beginnings textbook designers have identified and validated an organized body of knowledge, commonly called instructional technology, for the purpose of developing texts as more effective instructional tools. Recent developments in the areas of learning theory and message design and further refinement of such instructional techniques as questioning strategies, behavioral objectives, scope and sequence, and readability formulas can be found in most contemporary texts (Young and Riegeluth, 1988).

At a fundamental level, the textbook reflects a message/messenger status; the message, however, can be "qualified." For example, the message(s) in an elementary science text can be "qualified" by evaluating its content (i.e., on-

going prose, illustrations, and highlight material.) At a basic level, the message is the learning of science principles and concepts; another message may be that science is a people-discipline where individuals of all walks of life are actively involved in science activities; and a third message may be that the discipline of science is especially suited for young children who can learn to employ basic scientific principles to make sense of their immediate environments. Most educators would find a text's basic message the most important; however, instructional designers and textbook researchers are more apt to suggest that all of the identified messages are important, particularly in identifying what students learn by interacting with a textbook.

Richardson holds that the multicultural messages in textbook content, regardless of the discipline, can be "qualified" as productive or counterproductive. Productive multicultural content (1) "reflects, supports, and affirms . . . the identities, experiences, and concerns of ethnic minority pupils or students" and (2) "criticizes and challenges . . . false beliefs about" (1986, p. 40) the superiority of the dominant culture. On the other hand, counterproductive content ignores or rejects the concerns of ethnic minority students and reinforces false beliefs about the superiority of the dominant culture.

While certainly curricula should be productive in the area of multiculturalism, equally important is whether the technology included in texts (e.g., objectives, questioning strategies) is effective at assisting teachers to promote among students an understanding and appreciation of America's cultural diversity. That is, the value of the textbook in the teaching and learning process is a two-fold question. Are productive texts sufficiently powerful in the area of technology to promote multicultural

principles? When teachers use textbook technology appropriately are they successful at promoting multicultural principles among students (e.g., increasing knowledge of America's cultural diversity, reducing stereotypic characterizations of societal groups, increasing intergroup relations)?

Contemporary secondary U.S. history texts appear to be quite productive and powerful. That is, they incorporate content depicting the experiences of minority groups (i.e., African Americans, American Indians, Asians, Hispanics) and integrate a number of techniques and devices that are representative of the latest findings in the area of instructional technology. However, while these textbooks are multicultural, little knowledge exists about their use by teachers to promote multiculturalism. Further, little is known about whether students, as a result of being in a classroom with teachers who use these texts appropriately, are internalizing a multicultural message and thus becoming more understanding and accepting of cultural diversity in the United States.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was three-fold: (1) review the treatment of minorities in elementary and secondary textbooks, (2) outline various non-textbook and textbook approaches used to promote multicultural principles in elementary and secondary classrooms (e.g., knowledge of groups, prejudice reduction, appreciation for cultural differences), and (3) discuss preliminary results of a study that focuses on the use of a contemporary secondary U.S. history text for the purpose of enhancing a knowledge of African Americans and reducing prejudice among a group of secondary learners in a suburban community in the midwest.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Portrayal of Minorities in Textbooks

The Brown Decision, the dawning of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, America's concern for its "forgotten citizens," and minority educational attainment prompted politicians and educators to re-prioritize the goals of public education in the late 1950s. One goal educators attempted to address more seriously was the need for relevant resources or, as it came to be known, a multicultural curriculum.

The initial attempts by the publishing industry to develop multicultural texts were crude at best. In basal readers and elementary science and mathematics textbook illustrations characters who were white, overnight, became black. Eventually, as publishers perceived the need as legitimate, significant changes were initiated.

If multicultural means the inclusion of ethnic content in curricular materials, most contemporary texts, if not all, used in elementary classrooms are multicultural (Powell and Garcia, 1985; Garcia, Harris, Torres, 1990). A cursory review of recently published basal readers, for example, confirms the findings of a study conducted in the early 1980s: basal readers include literature that depicts the experiences of African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanics; moreover, in many of the basal stories included, minorities and females are portrayed in major and minor roles displaying a variety of behaviors and emotions (Logan and Garcia, 1983). Contemporary elementary science and mathematics series also include illustrations depicting members of these same groups actively involved in science and mathematics oriented activities (Powell and Garcia, 1985; Garcia, Harris, and Torres, 1990).

At the secondary level the publication of Land of the Free (1967), an eighth grade social studies text targeted for the California market, ushered in a change in the status quo. Authored by John W. Caughey, John Hope Franklin, and Ernest R. May, Land of the Free is considered by many to be the first major text to include a significant amount of content depicting the contributions of African Americans to the American experience. In the 1970s and 1980s a number of studies appeared in the literature suggesting that most secondary texts in the area of economics, geography, sociology, government, and U.S. history had improved considerably in depicting societal groups (Ellington, 1986).

However, the U.S. history textbook is where improvement is most apparent, particularly in the portrayal of African Americans. Both Garcia and Tanner (1985) and Peters (1986) point to a significant improvement in the characterization of African Americans in texts published in the 1980s over those published in the early 1960s. It also appears that even though the political winds in the 1980s suggest a climate different from that of the 1970s, content describing the black experience remains a significant part of most secondary U.S. history texts (Garcia and Goebel, 1985). Content describing the experiences of American Indians and Hispanics also is found in these texts but it is unclear whether the treatment is broad and comprehensive.

While minority content has increased and improved over time, few writers, editors, curriculum directors, and classroom teachers discuss its purpose and use in a textbook. A cursory look at the literature in the area of "goals and objectives" suggests that multicultural programs have multiple purposes. Given a particular program, multicultural content in a secondary U.S. history text

could serve any one or more of the following goals: (1) provide minorities with relevant content, (2) provide minorities with role models, (3) inform non-minority students of the contributions of minorities to the American experience, (4) provide all students with a more comprehensive view of American history, and (5) highlight any and all experiences of minorities. Most teacher edition textbooks contain no information that specifically identifies the purpose of multicultural content or outlines to teachers how best to use it in the instructional process. Some would argue that the purpose of multicultural content in a U.S. history text should be to address these goals and possibly others but no one has considered critically whether this is possible or feasible.

On a parallel level, it also can be argued that many of the evaluations of curricular materials for multicultural content are suspect since, in most instances, researchers speculated as to its purpose. If the purpose of a writer of a secondary U.S. history text is to highlight any and all experiences of minorities, that content would not necessarily provide students with a comprehensive view of American history. Similarly, an author who features a traditional (i.e., economic, political, military events) interpretation of American history would be hard pressed to include a significant amount of content that provides minorities with relevant information and role models.

Instructional Strategies Aimed at Changing Attitudes in the Classroom

A variety of curricular and instructional strategies, when properly implemented, can lead to a change in racial attitudes. Pate (1981), however, notes that strategies must be tempered with "ground rule" generalizations about prejudice reduction and attitude change: (1) Knowledge about a certain group

may not necessarily change one's attitude toward that group. (2) Socioeconomic class prejudice may be stronger than racial or religious prejudice. (3) A good self-image likely results in a low level of prejudice. (4) Racially-mixed student groups develop positive attitudes toward each other as they work together. (5) The cognitive/affective/behavioral components of prejudicial attitudes are not necessarily interrelated. (6) Media presentations improve racial attitudes. (7) Social interaction reduces prejudice in certain situations.

According to Pate (1981), one of the more effective approaches of changing racial attitudes in a classroom is the application of films. A number of studies (Cooper and Dinerman, 1951; Shook, 1972; Houser, 1978; Kraus, 1978) have demonstrated prejudice reduction among whites towards African Americans using commercially produced films. On a less consistent level, role-playing and simulation games have resulted in statistically significant changes in racial attitudes toward African Americans. Janis and King (1954) employed the former approach while the latter was successfully used in studies by Flavell, Botkin, Fry, Wright, and Jarvis (1968), DeKock (1969), and Perry and Hesses (1974). Helping an individual gain a personal understanding and sensitivity toward racial or ethnic groups through a vicarious experience also has been found to be effective in reducing prejudicial attitudes (Butler, 1982).

Another effective but delicate strategy for reducing prejudice is intergroup contact. Pate (1981) and Selltiz and Cook (1963) caution that such contact can be successful only in situations where students are of equal status, similar characteristics and interests, favorable norms, and in classroom environments stressing cooperative strategies. According to Pate

(1981), these conditions should not detract from the potential power of the contact theory, but rather should underlie the necessary conditions to be met. Several studies support the principle of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice (Horowitz, 1936; Williams, 1947; Whitmore, 1957; Singer, 1964; Glock et al., 1975).

Three particular areas surface when researchers refer to the approach of employing specific knowledge as a method of changing racial or ethnic attitudes: curriculum innovation, reading books and/or multiethnic readers, and specific courses and/or units. Researchers in these three areas accept the assumption that the acquisition of new information is linked to attitudinal change. A number of studies appear in the area of curriculum innovation. Georgeoff (1967) conducted a cognitive and attitudinal study by introducing a group of fourth graders to a new social studies curriculum that stressed knowledge of the black experience. His findings indicated that curricular content positively influenced African American and white students in knowledge gained, improved interracial relations, and improved self-concepts. Other studies reached similar results (Bronzo, 1970; Westphal, 1974 and 1977).

Reading fiction and/or nonfiction also may have an impact on student attitudes. Employing a questionnaire, Smith (1948) asked over 500 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders how they were influenced by their reading assignments; Shirley (1969) and Culp (1975) posed similar questions to secondary and college students, respectively. All three studies concluded that student racial attitudes toward African Americans were positively modified as a result of exposure to books that portrayed the targeted group in a positive fashion. Litcher and Johnson (1969), Yawkey (1973) and Derbaum (1981) reached like conclusions in studies that required elementary learners to read and discuss

content in multiethnic readers and social studies texts. Similarly, literature packages (e.g., stories, poetry, plays, novels, autobiographies, and audio-visual presentations) also are effective at modifying racial attitudes among elementary and secondary students (Gezi and Johnson, 1970; Madden, 1970; Cooke, 1971; Page, 1974; Martin, 1980).

A number of studies support the contention that employing a course and/or unit that describes the experiences of a minority group(s) in conjunction with textbook information may positively affect knowledge acquisition and influence the attitudes of white secondary students toward the targeted minority group(s). The Maxson (1970) study is typical of studies carried out over the last fifty years. He investigated the effects of a structured learning environment on the racial attitudes of white high school students. Utilizing an experimental-control group design in which one secondary U.S. history class was taught a specific unit on African Americans and other minorities while the other class received no such instruction, Maxson found that the presentation of favorable information about African Americans reduced ethnocentric behavior and the negative attitudes of the white students toward minorities.

A Study of Reducing Prejudice

Earlier we suggested that most contemporary secondary U.S. history texts are both multiculturally and technologically "productive" and "powerful" in depicting minority groups. As a result of this assertion we posed two research questions: (1) Does multicultural content promote knowledge acquisition and positively modify the racial attitudes of whites toward minority groups? (2) Do teachers who use a textbook's technology appropriately enhance knowledge acquisition and promote multicultural principles among students?

One of the authors of this paper (Sanchez, 1990) is directing a study that examines these two questions. The study focuses on teaching and learning among U.S. history teachers and sophomore students at two high schools. The purpose of this year-long study is two-fold: (1) to determine whether racial attitudes of whites toward African Americans is related to students' knowledge of the group and (2) to examine the effects of limited and extensive use of a textbook's technology by teachers and students on knowledge acquisition and racial attitudes.

The high schools are located in a predominately white suburban community in the Midwest. They are similar in terms of socioeconomic status, enrollment, graduation rate, percentage of college-bound students, and number of African American students. The subjects are one-hundred ninety high school sophomores; six students in the pool were identified as African Americans.

While all of the U.S. history teachers in the two schools volunteered to participate in the study, only four were selected. The following process was employed to select the teachers: (1) during a seven question interview, the subjects were asked to describe how they employed the textbook in instruction and (2) the subjects were observed twice in their classrooms to verify the data collected in the interviews. Once selected, two teachers were placed in the supportive textbook/limited utilization (STLU) group and the other two in the comprehensive textbook/extensive utilization (CTEU) group. The teachers assigned to the STLU group used the standard features of the textbooks such as section and chapter reviews. The students usually read the text in class and completed writing assignments that focused on recall and comprehension questions located at the end of each chapter. The CTEU teachers used the technological features of the text extensively. They made use of the

background information and the questions included at the beginning of units and chapters provided in the teachers edition. They also made extensive use of illustrations and highlight material to challenge or support information provided in the on-going content. These teachers required the students to read for meaning and to reflect, challenge, and support textbook content; similarly, teachers employed a variety of questions in classroom discussions that extended student learning well beyond the chapter reviews. Writing assignments also required the students to recall, interpret, analyze textbook content, and to hypothesize beyond the information provided.

Both social studies departments in each of the high schools utilize America: The Glorious Republic (Graff, 1988), the third most used text in the state and equally popular nationally; the text reflects the integration of subject matter with instructional technology. The student text is attractive (i.e., well packaged, easy to read print). The text is subdivided into units, chapters, and sections; the chapters also include objectives and section reviews and a chapter review. In addition, each chapter includes a variety of illustrations, and highlight material that extends learning. Similarly, the teachers edition contains background information, a variety of questions to stimulate the curiosity of most students, and review and test items that require the student to demonstrate levels of understanding of information included in the text. An item-by-item content analysis using over two-hundred factual items about African Americans revealed that America: The Glorious Republic includes content that is similar to what is found in other contemporary secondary U.S. history textbooks.

Two instruments were administered to all of the student subjects. The Black History Knowledge Test, a 40-item objective measure of the black

experience, was designed by the researcher and is based on information included in contemporary secondary U.S. history textbooks. The second instrument was the Multifactor Racial Attitude Inventory (MRAI), a one-hundred twenty item measure of racial attitudes toward blacks (Woodmansee and Cook, 1967). The four teachers were asked to complete the MRAI; it was assumed these subjects were knowledgeable about the African American experience and viewed multicultural content as an integral part of the textbook.

Preliminary results from the Black History Knowledge Test suggest that knowledge acquisition differs among the students in the two teacher groups. It appears that extensive use of the textbooks' technological features do help students acquire knowledge about blacks. Informal interviews with the four U.S. history instructors also indicate that students assigned to the two CTEU teachers are exhibiting a greater tolerance in the spring than they were in the fall toward cultural diversity in American society. While these results are preliminary, the data seem to suggest that textbooks, instructional technology, and teachers are important variables in developing instructional strategies aimed at increasing knowledge acquisition and changing attitudes among students.

Discussion

Most elementary and secondary textbooks are multicultural; that is, they include content that describes some facet of the minority experience. While critics may argue that depictions of groups are "racist," the evidence seems to suggest that the textbook industry has made significant progress in the portrayal of societal groups in curricular materials. The racist characterizations common at the turn of the century are no longer found in

state adopted materials. Certainly, distortions and stereotyping surface occasionally, but such instances are the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, it can be argued that alleged "distorted" and "stereotypic" depictions of minorities may represent, in some instances, a lack of communication among writers, educators, and special interest groups as to the purpose of multicultural content in textbooks. With respect to curricular material, the real issue centers on whether publishers and writers are capable of depicting societal groups in a way that would be acceptable to the proponents of multicultural education and the many interest groups concerned with what students should read and see in state and district adopted materials.

An inference drawn from the review of literature included in this paper is that what is important is not the amount of multicultural content included in a text but a teacher's role in the instructional program. It appears that students--elementary, secondary, college--became more knowledgeable about African Americans and modified their attitudes toward the group as a result of the teacher's use of multicultural materials. The studies further suggest that these teachers may have focused on some of the following: (1) employed more than the textbook in the instructional program, (2) used curricular materials effectively, (3) asked a variety of questions, (4) selected the appropriate student assignments, and (5) employed the appropriate teaching strategies that facilitated knowledge acquisition and attitudinal changes. In short, the key to realizing multicultural goals continues to be the teacher. Certainly, more "powerful" and "productive" texts contribute to a teacher's success but texts are only tools in the instructional process. The teacher is the important catalyst.

On a more general level, the important question is what do teachers do when they find curricular material that presents a distorted or stereotypic portrayal of a particular societal group? Why are some teachers more successful than others at enhancing knowledge acquisition and changing attitudes among students? These questions raise programmatic concerns related to teacher training and, more specifically, to the competency levels of teachers in the area of multicultural education. Do graduates of teacher education programs gain an understanding and appreciation of America's cultural diversity? Do they gain a knowledge base of the historical and educational experiences of minorities in public education? Do they discover their prejudices and learn how to deposit this excessive baggage outside the classroom door?

While knowledge of some of the general principles of multicultural education is fundamental, equally important is mastery of the many methods of dealing with omissions, distortions, and stereotypes found in curricular materials, particularly textbooks. Unlike many educators, we are not totally convinced that textbooks are boring, irrelevant, and of questionable use in instruction. The problem may not be the textbooks, but the manner in which they are employed in the instructional process. Preliminary results from the Sanchez study suggest that some teachers under-utilize a text's instructional technology, confine learning to the basic text, and involve students in tasks that can be characterized as less than challenging. Certainly, teachers who follow such an approach will characterize texts as boring. So will their students.

On the other hand, the more effective teachers employ a variety of materials, make effective use of curricula, and are aware of the advantages

and limitations of textbooks. They also are aware that learning occurs as a result of the interaction between the teacher, student, and resources. These teachers know they are the most important link in the instructional program. In short, the issue is not whether materials are "boring" but whether teachers give meaning to the phrase "productive" and "powerful" in the instructional program.

Conclusion

Educators are unable to cite any significant progress in addressing the social goals of education (i.e., recognizing, understanding, and appreciating cultural diversity, living and working in a democratic society). Recent racial demonstrations on high school and college campuses suggest that more could be done in the area of intergroup relations. "Pointing the finger" and "blaming the other guy" may ease our consciences but such tactics do not address the issue. A more reasonable approach would be to ensure that prospective teachers are knowledgeable of America's cultural pluralism and familiar with the many effective methods of employing curricular materials and strategies that deal with issues related to minorities, ethnic groups, and intergroup relations. The issue is not necessarily a quantitative expansion of education courses on minorities or intergroup relations but a qualitative examination of the knowledge of cultural pluralism and the many teacher strategies needed to promote the goals of multicultural education in core professional education courses.

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